

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PALERM 00041 211025Z
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SUBJ: THE STATUS OF LOCAL-LEVEL "CONFRONTO" IN SICILY

1. SUMMARY: IN NONE OF SICILY'S NINE PROVINCES OR THEIR CAPITAL CITIES DID THE NUMERICAL RESULTS OF THE LAST ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTION (JUNE 1975) REQUIRE THE FORMATION OF FRONTIST PCI-PSI) GIUNTAS, THOUGH MANY SUCH ADMINISTRATTONS WERE FORMED IN SMALLER JURISDTCTIONS. FOLLOWTNG THE JUNE, 1976, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS, HOWEVER, AND THE NEW TRENDS TOWARD COMPETITIVE DIALOGUE ("CONFRONTO") WITH THE PCI AT THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS, COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS HAS CARRIED THE REGIONAL EXPERIMENT, IN A VARTETY OF VERSIONS, TO A GROWING NUMBER OF LESSER JURISDICTIONS. PREVIOUS REPORTING HAS COVERED SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

PAGE 02 RUFRSGG0727 C O N F I D E N T I A L

OF THIS PHENOMENON. THERE FOLLOWS AN ISLAND-WIDE SURVEY.END SUMMARY

2. PALERMO: THE FORMATION OF A DC-PSI-PSDI GIUNTA AND THE ADOPTION OF A PROGRAM IN WHICH THE PCI CONCURS ENDED AN ELEVEN-MONTH CRISIS IN THE PALERMO PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT. AN ESSENTIAL ADDITIONAL INGREDIENT WAS A SPLIT IN THE "ANTI-CONFRONTO" FANFANIANO RANKS WHICH DEPRIVED THAT LONG-DOMINANT FACTION OF A MAJORITY IN THE DC PROVINCIAL COUNCIL DELEGATION. A SIMILAR ARRANGEMENT - THOUGH OF LONGER STANDING - SUSTAINS THE PALERMO CITY GOVERNMENT.

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PAGE 02 PALERM 00041 211025Z

3. AGRIGENTO: AGRIGENTO'S FRONTIST PCI-PSI-PSDI-PRI) PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION RESIGNED OVER A BUDGET VOTE ON MARCH 30, 1976 AFTER A TENURE OF LESS THAN FOUR MONTHS. A FOUR-PARTY CENTER-LEFT GIUNTA NOW GOVERNS THE PROVINCE WITH SOMETHING CALLED "BENEVOLENT ATTENTION" FROM THE PCI. AN ALL-DC GIUNTA UNDER AN "OPERATING PACT" WHICH EXTENDS TO ALL PARTIES BUT THE MSI-DN HAS GOVERNED THE CITY OF AGRIGENTO SINCE 1975.

4. CALTANISSETTA: ON MAY 26, 1976, A DC-PSDI GIUNTA SUCCEEDED A PREVIOUS PCI-PSI-PSDI-PRI GIUNTA IN THE CALTANISSETTA PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION. A SIMILAR DC-PSDI ARRANGEMENT IS IN OPERATION IN THE CALTANISSETTA CITY ADMINISTRATION THOUGH BOTH THE SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS ARE PRESSING HARD FOR A BROADER RELATIONSHIP THAT

PAGE 03 RUFRSGG0727 C O N F I D E N T I A L

WOULD ENCOMPASS AT LEAST THEIR TWO PARTIES.

5. IN GELA, AN IMPORTANT OIL-REFINING CENTER IN CALTANISSETTA PROVINCE, MEMBERS OF ONE DC FACTION (MPEGNO DEMOCRATICO) VOTED IN APRIL LAST YEAR FOR A PCI, PSI, PSDI GIUNTA IN WHICH ONE OF THE MAVERICK CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS SERVES AS MAYOR.

6. CATANIA: BOTH PROVINCE AND CAPITAL CITY HAVE DC-PSI-PSDI-PRI ADMINISTRATIONS IN OPEN DIALOGUE WITH THE PCI. THE OTHER FEATURE OF THESE ADMINISTRATIONS IS THE RETURN OF THE PSI AFTER A VERY LONG PERIOD IN THE COLD. MORE STRIKING IS THE FACT THAT, UNTIL RECENTLY, CATANIA WAS CONSIDERED ITALY'S "BLACKEST" CITY. IN THE 1971 REGIONAL ELECTIONS, THE MSI-DN HAD NEARLY QUADRUPLD ITS STRENGTH IN CATANIA AND EVEN NOW HAS THE SAME NUMBER OF CITY COUNCILORS AS THE PCI.

7. ENNA: DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAM IN WHICH BOTH THE PCI AND PSI CAN CONCUR IS WELL UNDER WAY FOR THE ENNA PROVINCIAL AND CITY ADMINISTRATIONS WHERE DC-PSDI-PRI GIUNTAS NOW RULE. AT THE PROVINCE, WHERE THE PRESENT GIUNTA HAS ONLY MINORITY SUPPORT, AGREEMENT AMONG THE "CONSTITUTIONAL ARC" PARTIES IS IMMINENT. IN THE CITY GOVERNMENT, WHERE THE CURRENT MAJORITY IS STRONGER, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ARE SLOWING DOWN THE PROCESS DESPITE A COMMUNIST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PALERM 00041 211025Z

PAGE 04 RUFRSGG0727 C O N F I D E N T I A L

CAMPAIGN FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP IN THE GIUNTA.

8. MESSINA: DC-PSI-PRI GIUNTAS BASED ON A COMMON PROGRAM WITH THE PCI GOVERN BOTH THE PROVINCE AND THE CITY. THE MUNICIPAL GIUNTA, LIKE A ROLE FOR THE PCI, IS BRAND NEW. LAST AUGUST A LOCAL JUDGE UNSEATED THE MAYOR AND, BY CHAIN REACTION, THE CITY GIUNTA, FOLLOWING ALLEGED ADMINISTRATIVE IRREGULARITIES. THIS INTERRUPTED. PERHAPS ONLY TEMPORARILY, AN IMPRESSIVE RECORD OF STABILITY DUE LARGELY TO THE CONTROL EXERCISED IN HIS OWN ELECTORAL FIEF BY PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER ANTONINO GULLOTTI.

9. RAGUSA: THOUGH A FOUR-PARTY, CENTER-LEFT ADMINISTRATION GOVERNS THE PROVINCE, THE DC-PSDI-PRI CITY GIUNTA HAS "PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT" FROM THE PCI, PSI AND PLI.

10. SIRACUSA: TRADITIONALLY, SICILY'S "REDDEST" PROVINCE, DC-PSI-PSDI-PRI GIUNTAS WITH "PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT" FROM THE PCI ARE INSTALLED AT THE PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL LEVELS. THE 1975

ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS SAW THE LOSS OF AN ABSOLUTE DC MAJORITY IN THE CAPITAL CITY AND AN EROSION OF PCI STRENGTH THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE. A DC-PSI GIUNTA REPLACED A FRONTIST ADMINISTRATION IN THE MAJOR PROVINCIAL TOWN OF AVOLA; WHILE IN ANOTHER, LENTINI, A DC GIUNTA RULES WITH EXTERNAL PCI SUPPORT, FOLLOWING SCANDALS

PAGE 05 RUFRSGG0727 C O N F I D E N T I A L

WHICH TOPPLED A TRADITION OF FRONTIST ADMINISTRATIONS.

11. TRAPANI: BILLED AS AN EMERGENCY ADMINISTRATION TO COPE WITH RECENT FLOOD DAMAGE, TRAPANI ELECTED ON NOVEMBER 30, 1976, A DC-PSI-PSDI-PRI GIUNTA WITH THE LIBERALS AND COMMUNISTS ABSTAINING ON THE VOTE WHICH ELECTED THE GIUNTA BUT AGREEING ON A UNITARY ACTION PLAN FOR THE CITY. THE PCI IS NOW PRESSING FOR SIMILAR ENTREE AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL.

12. COMMENT: GIVEN THE ANTI-COMMUNIST ELECTORAL STANCE ADOPTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 PALERM 00041 211025Z

BY THE DC AND THE MANDATE IT RECEIVED FROM ITS ELECTORATE, THE TORTURED TAXONOMY AND THE SEVERAL FORMS TAKEN BY LOCAL LEVEL "CONFRONTO" HAVE FEATURED A MAXIMUM DEGREE OF CAMOUFLAGE. ALMOST EVERYWHERE SUCH ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN CONSUMATED TO COMPENSATE FOR SQUABBLING BOTH BETWEEN THE DC AND ITS TRADITIONAL GOVERNING PARTIES AND WITHIN THE DC ITSELF. PARADOXICALLY, ELSEWHERE IN ITALY WHERE THE ELECTION RESULTS DID NOT PERMIT THE DC TO FORM LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITHOUT THE COMMUNISTS, THE PARTY HAS GONE INTO THE OPPOSITION. IN SICILY, WHERE THE NUMBERS FREQUENTLY PERMITTED THE DC TO GOVERN ALMOST WITHOUT ALLTFS, IT HAS CONSISTENTLY OPTKD FOR OR DRIFTED INTO) SOME FORM OF SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PCI. MUCH OF THIS IS DOUBTLESS

PAGE 06 RUFRSGG0727 C O N F I D E N T I A L

A FUNCTION OF TRASFORMISMO IN AN AREA WHICH INVENTED THE WORD. INDEED, IN SOME CASES, PREVIOUS FRONTIST ADMINISTRATIONS HAVE GIVEN WAY TO DC-LED COMBINATIONS ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE LATTER ALSO HAVE AT LEAST TACIT TIES TO THE PCI. THE FACT REMAINS, HOWEVER, THAT THE LINES SEPARATING THE DC FROM ITS LEFTIST OPPOSITION IN SICILY ARE GROWING CONSISTENTLY MORE FUZZY.

COLLINS

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